Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BERN 01394 011751Z ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BERN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4147

INFO USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

SECRETBERN 1394

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR SY US XF SZ

SUBJ: PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH THE SYRIAN PRESIDENT IN GENEVA

REF: BERN 1337

1. HEGNER CALLED ME THIS MORNING AFTER HIS VISIT TO THE GENEVA AREA. THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND HE ARE NOW STRONGLY IN FAVOR OF THE GALLATIN HOUSE FOR THE MEETING. HEGNER SAID THE HOUSE IS LARGERN THAN HE HAD REALIZED, AND HAS A SECOND NEIGHBORHING HOUSE (ONCE STAFF QUARTERS) WITH ABOUT 25 SMALL ROOMS. THE THIRD HOUSE ON THE GROUNDS IS OCCUPIED BY THE FORMER OWNERS OF THE PROPERTY (WHOM THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POLICE CAN VOUCH FOR). THE MAIN HOUSE HAS TWO DRAWING ROOMS, A DINING ROOM THAT CAN SEAT TWENTY, GOOD FACILITIES FOR PRIVATE QUARTERS FOR THE PRESIDENT, AND ENOUGH ADDITIONAL ROOMS FOR THE PRESIDENT'S IMMEDIATE STAFF. HEGNER WAS VERY MUCH TAKEN WITH THE AESTHETICS OF THE PLACE, AND POINTED OUT THAT THE HISTORICAL CONNECTION WITH GALLATIN WOULD BE A NICE TOUCH.

2. SO FAR AS ACCESS IS CONCERNED, HENGER SAYS IT COULD SECRET

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BE BY TWO-ROTOR HELICOPTER (THERE IS A SUITABLE LANDING PLACE) OR BY A CAR RIDE OF APPROXIMATELY FIVE MINUTES. AT LEASE ONE OF THE HIGHWAY OVERPASSES CAN BE ELIMINATED BY TAKING SMALLER ROADS AND THE LOCAL POLICE AND SWISS GOVERNMENT ARE NOW CONFIDENT THAT SAFE GROUND ACCESS CAN BE ASSURED. THE ESTATE IS IN A SMALL VILLAGE, BUT THE POLICE SAY THAT ACCESS CAN BE COVERED FROM ALL ANGLES.

HEGNER SAID TRAFFIC BETWEEN THE ESTATE AND THE U S MISSION BUILDING COULD BE CONTROLLED DURING THE TIME THE PRESIDENT IS IN THE GENEVA AREA TO INSURE RAPID AUTOMOBILE TRANSIT.

3. THE SWISS AUTHORITIES WILL BE HAPPY TO RECEIVE U S SECURITY REPRESENTATIVES WHEN WE FIND THIS CONVENIENT (PRESUMABLY AVOIDING EASTER WEEKEND). HEGNER MENTIONED ONCE AGAIN THAT ANY INFORMATION WE CAN GIVE THEM ABOUT NUMBERS IN THE PRESIDENT'S PARTY, OUR DESIRES REGARDING COMMUNICATIONS, ETC. (REFTEL) WILL OF COURSE BE HELPFUL. DAVIS

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